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"Invading *Walden*," Part I: An Exchange between Walter Harding and Wallace Stegner

Steven Hartman

The lead article of *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 211, published exactly ten years ago, announced the Society's acquisition of the three largest privately held Thoreau collections in existence: the collections of Walter Harding (1917-1996), Raymond Adams (1898-1987), and Roland Robbins (1908-1987), none of whom should require much introduction to readers of the *Bulletin*.[1] Yet for the sake of any readers who may be new to the *Bulletin* or to Thoreau studies in general, an introduction to one of these figures, Walter Harding, is in order, particularly since the present article and the archival materials it presents are strawberries from his own garden, if I may liberate a trope from James Russell Lowell. Those items are an exchange of letters between Harding and author Wallace Stegner (1909-1993) from July 1940; with the kind permission of their respective estates, the letters are published here for the first time in facsimile.[2]

On 10 April 1996, one year after donating his collection to the Thoreau Society, Walter Harding passed away—and so ended an era in the history of Thoreau studies. Now, almost a decade later, it is not too soon to begin considering more fully the impact that Walter Harding had on Thoreau's reception in the twentieth century, in much the same way as we have discussed for some time now the impact that figures like Harrison G. O. Blake, Henry Salt, and Samuel A. Jones—or even, for better or worse, Franklin B. Sanborn—made on the trajectory of Thoreau's reputation during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In Harding's case these impacts have been more significant and more numerous than the scholarly record alone may suggest, though Harding's contributions as a scholar are considerable by any standard.

Harding's devotion to Thoreau sometimes gave his published scholarship a mildly hagiographic hue. He was sold on Thoreau from the moment he first read *Walden* as a teenager during the Great Depression,[3] and his enthusiasm only seemed to grow as time went on, at times approaching something very like hero-worship. While such devotion may well be a precondition for serious enthusiasts, it is apt to be a liability in professional literary scholarship. Happily, this never became a disqualifying factor in the case of Harding's work. Items or information of great significance could at times escape his attention while he was preoccupied with matters that might be considered trivial to others, such as whether or not Thoreau was being snubbed again by the Hall of Fame for Great Americans at New York University. To his credit Harding readily and frequently acknowledged his pro-Thoreau bias, just as he seemed to recognize the limitations of his own habits of mind. He was not always right, yet he never presumed to have all the answers to begin with, and he was uncommonly generous in his appreciation of the work of other critics who brought valuable perspectives to the study of Thoreau's life and writings, even when they contradicted his own views.

Outside of specialist circles Walter Harding is perhaps best known today as the author of an excellent and accessible biography of Thoreau, *The Days of Henry Thoreau* (1965); updated and moderately revised in 1982, it is still generally considered the best all-around study of Thoreau's life and times. Scholars and enthusiasts alike may also know him from his fine *Variorum Walden* (1962) and its more reader-friendly later incarnation *Walden: An Annotated Edition* (1995), both of which enjoy exemplary, perhaps unequalled reputations among annotated editions of Thoreau's masterpiece. To Thoreau specialists Harding is indispensable for his edition (with Carl Bode) of *The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau* (1958), his historical study of Thoreau's reception, *The New Thoreau Handbook* (1980) (revised with Michael Meyer from Harding's original *Thoreau Handbook* of 1959), and for various anthologies of

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criticism on Thoreau to which he had contributed or which he had edited throughout his career. The contributions to the field made by these works alone are more than most scholars can hope to hang their hats on at the end of a career, and yet it may well be the case that Harding's work behind the scenes will prove in the end to have impacted prevailing understandings of Thoreau to an even greater extent.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that there would be no Thoreau Society as we know it today without Walter Harding. In July 1941, at the age of twenty-four, Harding founded the Society with his mentor Raymond Adams and a relatively small band of Thoreau enthusiasts, becoming the first and only secretary the Society would know for the first fifty years of its existence. Harding's short term as president in 1963-64 did not interrupt his execution of the office of secretary, which has never been a ceremonial post in this organization. Under Harding's watch it became nothing less than the lifeline of the society and the office through which resources, debates, questions, and findings concerning Thoreau's life, works, and cultural legacy were made better known to Thoreau scholars. This was largely because Harding viewed the editorship of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* as an extension of his secretary's office, and in this dual capacity he was able to channel any number of isolated discussions about Thoreau carried out among small groups of individuals or scholars into an ongoing discourse that became, over time, truly global in its reach.

The collection that Walter Harding and his family donated to the Society a decade ago is the largest assembled body of materials relating to Thoreau privately or publicly held in the world. It is also the most diverse of the Society's present holdings—*motley* is a word I rarely have occasion to use, but in this case it is a perfect fit. The reason is simple. The collection is the by-product of one man's "obsession" (Harding's term of choice) with the idea of knowing all there was to know about Thoreau. To this end Harding's collection grew to include any and all materials he could get his hands on relating to or coming from Thoreau, however indirectly. *Thoreauviana* was the neologism he coined for all that could conceivably fall under this category, though by implication virtually all of these items were artifacts of some cultural transaction, some more-or-less public exchange of information in which Thoreau was meaningfully implicated.

If we consider Harding's collection in terms of its untapped potential as a resource for future Thoreau scholarship, it is also, for my money, the most significant of the Society's holdings. This is partly true because it comprises such an odd assemblage of materials and would be impossible to replicate. An even stronger reason, however, is that for more than half a century Walter Harding was at the epicenter of Thoreau studies, and virtually all public communication of consequence relating to Thoreau (not to mention a fair share of private communication) sooner or later came under his scrutiny. Whether or not he fully recognized the value of all the information that came into his hands, one of Harding's greatest virtues as a collector was that he never stopped amassing all manner of materials pertaining to Thoreau's life, writings, and evolving reputation, regardless of whether it was relevant to his own ongoing scholarship. For this service, new generations of scholars, especially reception scholars like myself, will be in his debt for decades to come.

Harding's fifteen-thousand-plus items of Thoreauviana were dutifully if somewhat idiosyncratically recorded and catalogued, and many of them were reported upon sporadically in the pages of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*. A large number of items were recorded in Harding's ongoing Thoreau bibliography, a staple feature of the *Bulletin* from its inception and a feature whose value to Thoreau scholarship (then and now) is inestimable. Some of those items became the subjects of fuller discussion and analysis in articles like this one. A great many other items, particularly those not easily accounted for in standard bibliographic form, found their way into the "Notes & Queries" section of the *Bulletin* as space and occasion allowed, often in the form of droll anecdotes such as the following fairly typical note from *Bulletin* No. 126:

> The real name of singer Bobby Darin (who died on Dec. 20, 1973) was Walden Robert Cassotto, supposedly reflecting his father's interest in Thoreau. But since Darin often described his father as "a small-time gangster" we wonder at the connection.[4]

Over the years, Harding developed through the Thoreau Society an extensive network by which he routinely accessed all manner of new information, much of it, like the previous example, humorous but trivial, even at times bordering on the arcane in terms of potential interest. Yet a fair share of the information he brought to light through this network was also quite significant to the further development of Thoreau studies and the promotion of a better public understanding of Thoreau's life and writings. The following consecutive items from *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 45 (Fall 1953), an issue I picked at random, illustrate well the kinds of essential

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information Harding also kept tabs on, and then distilled to Thoreau students and scholars through the eclectic "Notes & Queries" section of the *Bulletin*:

> Recent acquisitions of the Thoreau Society Archives: An unpublished paper by E. J. Unger on "What was the measure of Emerson's Influence on Thoreau?" presented by Clayton Hoagland; the galley-proofs of Walter Harding's *Checklist of the Editions of Walden*, presented by the author.
>
> F. H. Allen has pointed out to us that as well as the [Thoreau] manuscripts listed in our Spring bulletin, Harvard University also has one of his commonplace books in its Widener Memorial Room.
>
> H. S. Canby is doing a much-needed rewriting of the Thoreau article for *Encyclopedia Britannica*.[5]

Of course, in gathering Thoreauviana Harding did not rely solely upon happenstance or the whims of his many informants. He continually sought information from a variety of sources, archival and popular, public and private. For instance, over the course of his career Harding wrote to a long list of public figures to inquire as to whether Thoreau had significantly influenced their lives or works. Typically these solicitations resulted from a Thoreauvian connection Harding had noted (or had reported to him) in the popular press: a reference to Thoreau in an article or interview, a well-publicized comment with a Thoreauvian ring, allusions to Thoreau—often obvious, sometimes oblique—in works of contemporary writing, art, or music. It's anyone's guess just how many people Harding approached in this way throughout his life, but we can safely assume that some of these people (whoever they were) never got around to answering his queries. The list of those who did answer, however, reads like an eclectic who's-who of American public life in the twentieth century. A sampling of some of those whose responses he chose to publish in the *Bulletin* include: George Bernard Shaw (*TSB* 29, Oct. 1949), John Dewey (*TSB* 30, Jan. 1950), Gene Tunney (*TSB* 31, April 1950) Albert Einstein (*TSB* 45, Fall 1953), Upton Sinclair (*TSB* 71, Spring 1960), Allen Ginsberg (*TSB* 112, Summer 1970), and President Jimmy Carter (*TSB* 165, Fall 1983).

Last summer, while visiting from Sweden on a Thoreau Society Fellowship to work with archival materials from the Harding Collection, I made a surprising rediscovery: a letter from before the Second World War written by author Wallace Stegner to Walter Harding. My research over the past few years has focused largely on Thoreau's reception among modern American writers, as well as on the various uses (usually conscious, if not always explicit) these writers have made of Thoreau's life and writings in their own literary productions. I have made it my business to know what leading American writers have thought—and, more importantly, what they have written—about Thoreau. Yet here was an item about which I had no previous knowledge. I had certainly never seen it referenced anywhere.

Stegner's letter to Walter Harding requires little explication. Yet a few clarifications may aid the reader. Stegner's novel *On a Darkling Plain* (1940) is—together with Thoreau—the subject of the entire letter; it was his third novel, though the first two, *Remembering Laughter* (1937) and *The Potter's House* (1938), are arguably novellas. "Vickers" refers to the protagonist of *On a Darkling Plain*, though one of Stegner's comments in the letter seems to suggest that it was also the name of a man remembered from childhood upon whom he based the novel's lead character. The reference to "Arnold" in the first paragraph is to English poet Matthew Arnold, from whose poem "Dover Beach" Stegner lifted the title of his novel. The reference to "MacLeish" is to American poet Archibald MacLeish: "You, Andrew Marvell" and "American Letter" are among some of his best-known early poems.

Here then, in its entirety, is Stegner's letter to Walter Harding reproduced in facsimile. This letter is a remarkable document, one of those detailed smoking-gun accounts of a literary work's genesis and eventual completion that literary historians and biographers hope in vain to find among an

Greensboro Bend, Vermont
July 14, 1940

Mr. Walter Harding
Lewis 308 U.N.C.
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Dear Mr. Harding:

If you were hoping for indications of direct borrowing from Thoreau in On a Darkling Plain I'm afraid my answer is going to be a little disappointing. The story is, naturally, a composite of a good many things. I don't know that it's worth anybody's while to sort them out, but here they are, roughly: a basis of real experience (I lived in Saskatchawan for six years, knew a person approximately like Vickers, went through the flu epidemic, and so on); a good salting of Arnold's schoolteacher pessimism which impressed me with its truth without convincing me of its usefulness or applicability in ordinary life; a walking trip in Vermont on which I had the double experience of reading MacLeish (in particular his favorite image of the world wheeling from light into dark: You, Andrew Marvell, [redacted] American Letter) and experiencing something of the same feeling myself. That double-exposure recalled memories of how the light came and went during my childhood on the Saskatchewan prairie, and the weight of a pack on my back recalled Vickers, who used to walk forty miles and back for s pplies, and the whole congeries of sensory impressions and memoriee brought p the general idea of solitude on the bare back of a continent. It is a difficult thing to say where book begins, but I think that is where this one began, even though I had used the returned veteran and the flu epidemic before. I had written my first novel about the flu epidemic, and burned it; then I had written a short story about Vickers, killing him of flu, and destroyed that; then I had taken the last part of that story, added things to it, and made it into a story simply of Vickers's death and burial. That didn't sell. So when I came finally to the writing of the novel I incorporated the burial piece into it, and it was published in that form in Redbook; in the final version I transposed the burial scene and gave it to Ina, and generously allowed Vickers to live. The result is that the final version of the book contains practically nothing of the things I had previously written in an attempt to get around the material.

This tells you nothing of possible Thoreau influence, but I am trying to think back upon the writing of the book to see if I can see any myself. I can't see any direct impetus from Thoreau, since I hadn't been reading him at the time and so far as I can remember didn't think of him until, with the manuscript piling up, I recognized the essential problem as the Thoreauvian dilemma.

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Naturally I have read Thoreau, and inevitably he has impressed e very greatly. Probably my admiration for him had something to do with the attraction of the gathering theme of Darkling Plain. His disgust with certain sides of human society is easy to agree with in 1940, and easy and perhaps mistaken imitations of his primitivism are tempting. I have a feeling that in this novel I have been labelling myself a pessimistic meliorist, and I have an uncomfortable conviction that Thoreau wouldn't go all the way with my solution ofthe problem. But all that is after the fact; before I wrote the book I wasn't consciously aware that I was invading Walden.

Perhaps it is best to put it this way: Even though I did not consciously walk in Thoreau's footsteps in the novel, I immediately recognized what I had done when it began to take shape. And that may be significant for your general topic of Thoreau's influence on fiction. He is certainly the founteinhead in American thought and American writing of that spirit of incorrigible independence, that isolated human atom fighting for its toehold in eternity, that we look back on now with nostalgia. The problem changes when the atoms get too thick, but the impulses are still there. To that extent I am, I suppose, also a "disciple" of Thoreau; my doctoral dissertation was an extention in terms of certain Western writers of Foerster's Nature in American Literature---and the qualities of those men are the qualities of Thoreau, in general.

So bracket me, if you choose. I am certainly influenced by Thoreau; I hunt up the most remote backwoods fa m in Vermont to spend my summers on; I write things that have the inescapable stamp of his influence on them. Call it a pervasive rather than a specific influence, and I am ready to agree that Darkling Plain stems from Walden. It's a poor thing, but mine own, and I rather like the idea of its having distinguished ancestors.

Sincerely,

author's papers. The letter is highly engaging, not least for its lucidity, balance, and intellectual vigor; its honesty and generosity of detail are also uncommon.

The letter sketches out, in successive stages, the conceptual genesis, literary influences, and experiential basis of Stegner's work. It also chronicles concisely his process of writing the novel: the possibilities he saw and the difficulties he encountered as he strove to shape a controlling idea into a work of literature—the false starts and restarts, the necessary inventions and creative permutations that occurred while bringing his first full (and fully realistic) novel gradually to completion. Finally, the letter relates the finished product of *On a Darkling Plain* to Stegner's creative forebear, Thoreau—"certainly the fountainhead in American thought and American writing of that spirit of incorrigible independence, that isolated human atom fighting for its toehold in eternity, that we look back on now with nostalgia."[6] Even the most jaded literary theorists standing firmly behind the allied notions that authorship and intention are dead as concerns of modern literary criticism would be hard put, I believe, to turn away from this letter, unless they had no interest whatsoever in American fiction of this period, or in the vicissitudes of literary reception and influence.

For such a brief document Stegner's letter contains a wealth of observations and reflections on the author's own life, on the craft of fiction and his own methods of literary production, and on what he calls the "gathering theme of On a Darkling Plain," the essential problem of "the Thoreauvian dilemma."[7] All of these reflections, and several more, are worthy of closer examination, particularly in relation to Stegner's early career as a writer, as well as to the tradition of American thought and letters out of which he was writing and into which he was contributing his own Thoreauvian project, by "invading Walden."

Having said all of this, I am opting in the present context to defer that discussion to the second installment of this article, which will appear in the next number of this *Bulletin*. If the primary focus in these pages has been Walter Harding's impact on a wider understanding of Thoreau and the continuing importance of his research collection, the next installment will focus more fully on Wallace Stegner's fictional distillations of a literary tradition identifiable with Thoreau (particularly as evident in *On a Darkling Plain*), as well as on his very real ambivalence toward some versions of this tradition as he found it promoted in American letters and popular culture.

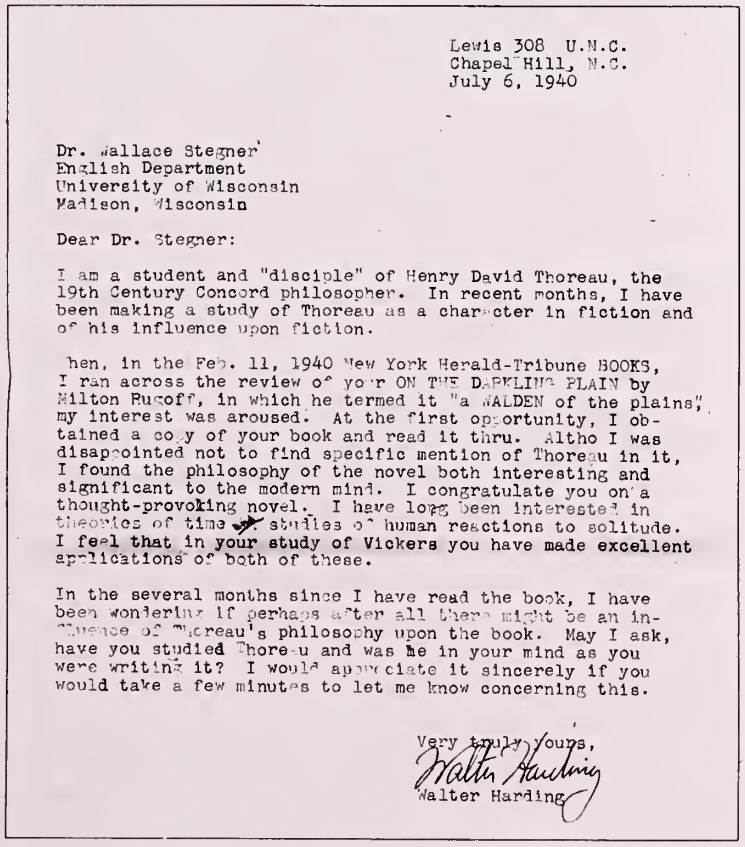
Stegner's letter was part of an exchange, a dialogue between two literary men who would each go on to achieve distinction in his particular sphere of affairs. Given the letter's obvious merits and points of interest, it is hard to imagine why it has never been published before. Viewed alongside all of the testimonials on Thoreau that Harding solicited and then made public through the years, Stegner's response stands out in a class of its own—by far the most impressive response that has yet come to light to any of Harding's queries among notable public figures about a possible Thoreauvian influence in their lives or works.

However much respect Walter Harding would go on to earn as the leading Thoreauvian of his day, it is worth reminding ourselves that when he wrote to Stegner in 1940 he was only twenty-three years old, had finished college scarcely a year before, and had little else to inspire such a motivated response other than some admirable pluck and a manifest desire to get to the bottom of a question that might intrigue few besides himself. His query, reproduced on the following page, is respectful without being fawning or phony, direct but not overbearing, and candid but hardly effusive: "I am a student and 'disciple' of Henry David Thoreau," he declares.[8]

None of these qualities should surprise those familiar with Harding's scholarship or with his leading role in the Thoreau Society. They are the very qualities, after all, that served Harding so well throughout his career as a literary and biographical sleuth in all matters Thoreauvian, and as the man who would inherit from Raymond Adams the honorific mantel, "dean of Thoreau scholars." But our knowledge of all of these things is anachronistic. At the time he wrote to Stegner in July 1940 these qualities were still largely latent, though they were in the process of coming to the surface.

It is clear from his letter to Stegner that Harding had a specific project in mind concerning Thoreau and modern fiction. Thoreau's influence on twentieth-century fiction,

poetry, and drama—as well as his presence in literary works as a character, a poetic vehicle, an imaginative focus, or as an influence—remained one of Harding's keenest interests throughout his career as a scholar. For more than half a century he gathered piecemeal whatever references to Thoreau he chanced upon, following up leads (however promising or unlikely) concerning Thoreau's presence in novels, short stories, plays, poems, or articles. It did not seem to matter greatly how significant or slight these appearances might be, and (at least as a qualifying or disqualifying factor) Harding showed nearly as little regard for the artistic merit, cultural significance, or social relevance of these works when he catalogued them for inclusion in his collection. No evidence has surfaced that Harding had any specific plans for a book or more ambitious series of articles on this topic, but he did frame his query to Stegner in very telling terms: "In recent months, I have been making a study of Thoreau as a character in fiction and of his influence upon fiction."[9] This suggests that Thoreau's representation in literature was quite possibly Harding's original scholarly interest in Thoreau, and if this is true it might also suggest that his query letter to Stegner represents one of his first, maybe even his very first, systematic attempt to conduct secondary research on a topic concerning Thoreau. One of Harding's earliest scholarly publications, nearly three years later, was "A Bibliography of Thoreau in Poetry, Fiction, and Drama."[10] The few short articles Harding penned on Thoreau's treatment in modern literature do not begin to suggest the bulk of material he gathered together on this subject throughout his life. The rediscovery of Wallace Stegner's July 1940 letter to him is ample proof that some documents in Harding's collection, though never reported in his own scholarship, may nevertheless prove to be significant contributions to our understanding of Thoreau and his cultural legacy.



Lewis 308 U.N.C.
Chapel Hill, N.C.
July 6, 1940

Dr. Wallace Stegner
English Department
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Stegner:

I am a student and "disciple" of Henry David Thoreau, the 19th Century Concord philosopher. In recent months, I have been making a study of Thoreau as a character in fiction and of his influence upon fiction.

When, in the Feb. 11, 1940 New York Herald-Tribune BOOKS, I ran across the review of your ON THE DARKLING PLAIN by Milton Rugoff, in which he termed it "a WALDEN of the plains", my interest was aroused. At the first opportunity, I obtained a copy of your book and read it thru. Altho I was disappointed not to find specific mention of Thoreau in it, I found the philosophy of the novel both interesting and significant to the modern mind. I congratulate you on a thought-provoking novel. I have long been interested in theories of time & studies of human reactions to solitude. I feel that in your study of Vickers you have made excellent applications of both of these.

In the several months since I have read the book, I have been wondering if perhaps after all there might be an influence of Thoreau's philosophy upon the book. May I ask, have you studied Thoreau and was he in your mind as you were writing it? I would appreciate it sincerely if you would take a few minutes to let me know concerning this.

Very truly yours,
Walter Harding
Walter Harding

For nearly sixty-five years Stegner's letter has been filed away in obscurity, although just why this has been the case is something of a mystery. Can it be that Harding forgot he had the letter? We should not be so quick to dismiss this possibility. In 1940 there was no Thoreau Society—hence no *Thoreau Society Bulletin* outlet for his Thoreauviana—and, except perhaps in his ambitions, Harding had not yet devoted himself to a scholar's avocation. He was on the cusp, however, of doing so. In fact, he had just relocated to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to begin graduate studies with Raymond Adams when it occurred to Harding that he should write his query to Stegner concerning a possible Thoreau influence.

More than two decades later Harding would include the following note on Stegner in the "Notes & Queries" section of *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 76 (Summer 1961): "Wallace Stegner alludes to Thoreau in his new novel, *A Shooting Star* (New York, Viking, 1961, pp. 17–19, 226)."[11] That's all there is to it. It's hard to imagine why anyone who would go to the trouble of publishing this kind of information would not also make public far more engaging commentary on Thoreau from the very same source, especially when the document in question was made to order and displays no small degree of intellectual and literary sophistication. Granted, in 1940 Stegner was hardly a household name, but he was already being greeted enthusiastically as a rising star by such literary figures as Robert Frost and Sinclair Lewis, as well as by publishers Harcourt Brace & Co. and Little Brown & Co.

It may be that Stegner's letter was simply misplaced for all those years, only to surface again when someone with a similar interest in Thoreau and modern fiction should go looking for leads. This, after all, is what happened. My own research on Thoreau's reception has picked up, in a sense, where Harding left off, and that's why I find his collected files, notes, and correspondence on Thoreaucentric literary works of inestimable value. Finding the letter was a mixture of calculation and dumb-luck, as I sifted through hundreds of uncatalogued files from the Harding Collection that contain materials on "Thoreau in fiction," "Thoreau in poetry," and "Thoreau in drama." Harding's raw intellectual life began to open up to me one scrap at a time as I pored over these materials, together with scores of other miscellaneous documents not clearly identified aside from cryptic catalogue numbers whose key, if any such exists, I was unable to discover.[12] The luck had to do with choosing which boxes from the collection to comb through piece by piece—not entirely at random, but partly so. The calculation had to do with my knowledge of Harding's interest in my research topic, and the hope that with a little industry, perseverance,

and luck I might benefit from the efforts of his unfinished labors.

At the very last Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society Harding was able to attend, his own description of his collection was read by Brad Dean to the assembled members; Harding could not deliver the gift presentation himself due to his weakened condition from a recent stroke. The presentation, to which he listened along with everyone else in the audience, turned out to be his farewell address to the Society. Here's what he had to say about his collection:

> I have the largest collection there is, I believe, of materials by and about Thoreau—more than fifteen thousand books, pamphlets, articles, clippings, manuscripts, and memorabilia, all pertaining to Thoreau. It has been a tremendous help to me in writing about Thoreau—I could not have done without it. But now, after sixty years, I have about written myself out. And so my wife, my four children, and I, not wishing to see this collection go to waste, have decided to give it to the Thoreau Society to have here in its national headquarters for the use of any who wish to study Thoreau.[13]

It would be fair to say of Harding's scholarly projects, to modify Emerson's famous observation on Thoreau, that the scale on which his studies proceeded was so large as to require *unnatural* longevity. Walter Harding certainly knew that others would have to complete his work.

We can judge a career by conventional standards; for instance, by the books a writer or scholar has published. In Harding's case he broke new ground enough times and in as many allied yet distinct areas to have earned the respect of even the most hard-bitten colleagues several times over, and all of these accomplishments are measurable in such conventional terms, through his production of BIG BOOKS: as a biographer of Thoreau, as a genetic editor of Thoreau's writings in manuscript, as a textual scholar and editor of probably the most generous annotated edition we have of *Walden*, and as a critic not only of Thoreau's published writings but of the reception of these writings in America and the world at large.

Yet Harding's accomplishments are as significant if we measure them in less conventional ways. For instance, he left the world of Thoreau studies several marvelous legacies which are tangible: in the thriving Society he helped to found and on which more than any single person he had a salutary impact; through the bulletin he edited for half a century, which may be the closest thing we have to Harding's intellectual autobiography, his own public journal; and finally in the unpredictable collections of Thoreauviana which he has bequeathed to us and from which we—and posterity—are now challenged to draw our own conclusions about Thoreau and his continuing relevance. Who knows but that some of Harding's greatest accomplishments do not lie buried in that massive, unwieldy record of one man's obsession with the idea of another man, like diamonds in the rough, waiting for their story to be told?

The Harding-Stegner exchange of 1940 is one such story. It records an interesting moment both in the history of modern Thoreau studies and in the history of twentieth-century American fiction. The letters provide a fresh "before" glimpse of Harding and Stegner against which to contrast the sage or respectable "after" pictures their names are likely to conjure up now. The writings of Wallace Stegner have begun to generate greater scholarly interest than ever before. This interest extends to a more general readership as well. In fact, I'm told by the author's son, writer Page Stegner, that *On a Darkling Plain* is expected to be reissued within the year, for the first time since its original print run. *Angle of Repose* (1970) and *The Spectator Bird* (1977), the novels that won Stegner the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in fiction, respectively, have never gone out of vogue, nor out of print, and that is true of most of the thirty books Wallace Stegner produced in a career that, like Harding's, lasted fifty-six years. An edition of Stegner's *Selected Letters* is also due out shortly, and I understand the letter printed here will be among the selections.

Harding will continue to be a figure to reckon with in Thoreau studies for a very long time to come. Yet long after his individual scholarly studies cease to be novel because the new ground they broke has at last become foundational, he will continue to be interesting as an object of study, as one of the principal stewards of Thoreau's public image and cultural reception in the twentieth century. Yet even then I believe he will always be capable of surprising our community with new—or, in any case, forgotten—information that he had the foresight to preserve from the inexorable processes of cultural amnesia. To a considerable extent, I suspect, Harding's continuing relevance will be tied to what we can make of his most unusual collection.

Notes

1. Roland Wells Robbins, the author of *Discovery at Walden*, was an amateur archeologist and discoverer of the exact location of Thoreau's Walden housesite. Raymond Adams was the Founding President of the Thoreau Society and perhaps the leading Thoreau scholar during the 1930s and into the 1940s.

2. I am indebted to the Manuscripts Division of the Marriott Library at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City for providing a digital photo of Walter Harding's letter, as well as for permission to publish a facsimile of this item; to the Thoreau Society for permission to publish a facsimile of Wallace Stegner's letter; and to Jeff Cramer, Curator of Collections at the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, for providing a digital image of this item. I also thank Leslie Perrin Wilson, Curator of Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library, for facilitating my access to the Stegner letter and other materials in the Harding Collection in the summer of 2004.

3. Walter Harding, "The Thoreau Society: A History" *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 155 (Spring 1981): 4–5.

4. Notes and Queries, *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 126 (Winter 1974): 7.

5. Notes and Queries, *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 45 (Fall 1953): 3.

6. Wallace Stegner, Letter to Walter Harding, 14 July 1940.
7. Stegner, Letter to Harding, 14 July 1940.
8. Walter Harding, Letter to Wallace Stegner, 6 July 1940.
9. Harding, Letter to Stegner, 6 July 1940.
10. Walter Harding, "A Bibliography of Thoreau in Poetry, Fiction, and Drama," *Bulletin of Bibliography* 18 (May 1943): 15–18.
11. "Notes and Queries," *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 76 (Summer 1961): 4.
12. Even now, ten years after Harding donated it, the collection is far from fully accessible through a finding aid, since a comprehensive list of contents is either buried in the collection or altogether lacking; many of the collection's folders thus hold the promise of new discovery.
13. Walter Harding, "A Thoreau Collection," *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 213 (Special Issue on the Thoreau Institute, [Fall 1995]): 7.

Be sure to visit the Thoreau Society's e-commerce site

www.shopatwaldenpond.org

The Profitability of Thoreau's Walden Experiment

Thomas J. Miceli

Thoreau took up residence at Walden Pond on 4 July 1845 in a house of his own construction, on eleven acres of land owned by Emerson.[1] During the next two years, he undertook his famous experiment in self-sufficiency. He had hoped to show that he could provide himself with all the necessities of life with far less time and effort than his overburdened neighbors appeared to expend, and in the end, he seemed satisfied with the result:

> All things considered ... notwithstanding the short time occupied by my experiment, nay, partly even because of its transient character, I believe that [I] was doing better than any farmer in Concord did that year.[2]

Walter Harding, Thoreau's foremost biographer, likewise proclaimed Thoreau's experiment "a complete success."[3]

Thoreau provided a detailed accounting of his income and expenses for the first year in "Economy," the opening chapter of *Walden*. According to his own calculations, he lost $25.21¾ during that year, which actually understated his loss since he did not account for the cost of the land on which he squatted.[4] His oversight suggests that his experiment may have been less than a success in economic terms. Of course, turning a profit was not Thoreau's primary objective, but in view of the importance that he himself attached to the economic aspects of his venture (after all, "Economy" is the first and longest chapter in the book), we are entitled to evaluate it on those grounds. A fair evaluation, however, requires use of the correct methodology; that is the purpose of my article.

The first step in properly calculating the profitability of Thoreau's experiment at Walden Pond is to distinguish between his net operating income and the value of his fixed assets. Generally speaking, the net income (or profit) of a business enterprise is the amount by which the flow of income or revenue exceeds the expenses during a given period of time (a year, say). In contrast, the assets of a business consist of the fixed (durable) investments in land and capital (buildings) that can be used to produce a stream of income over a number of years. Since the initial cost of these assets is a one-time expenditure, it should not enter the calculation of profit,[5] but should instead be used as a basis for calculating the *rate* of profit earned by the enterprise. Specifically, the ratio of the net income to the value of the assets (land plus capital) yields the rate of return on the assets.[6] This return provides a measure of the efficiency of the enterprise, and hence it can be compared to the returns on alternative investments that the entrepreneur could have made. It also offers a meaningful basis for comparing the profitability of enterprises of different scales, which cannot be done using net income.

In view of the distinction between net income and asset value, Thoreau's accounting of the profitability of his experiment over the first year (which, as noted, showed a loss of $25.21¾) is therefore possibly deceptive as a measure of its true profitability on two counts: first, he included a capital cost (his house) in his calculation of net income during the first year, and second, as noted, he ignored the cost of land altogether. Thus, his calculations do not reveal the true profitability of his experiment.

To do a proper calculation, we first need to determine Thoreau's net income, which consists of his gross income from the farm and from his non-farm labor:

Farm income	$23.44
Income from day labor	13.34
Total income	$36.78

less his expenses:

Farm one year[7]	$14.72½
Food	8.74
Clothing (eight months)	8.40¾
Oil, etc. (eight months)	2.00
Total expenses	$33.87¼

which yields:

	$36.78
	- 33.87¼
Net income	$ 2.90¾

Next, we must consider the initial investment in capital. The cost of the house was $28.12½, which we will treat as the value of the capital. Ideally, we would like to know the market value of the house, which is what someone would have paid for it, but we have no evidence on what that amount would have been.[8] In using construction cost, we are therefore probably understating the house's value, which will bias the calculated rate of return upward.

Finally, we turn to the value of the land that Thoreau cultivated. Although he was a squatter and hence paid no rent, the land was not valueless and hence it is not appropriate to treat it as a free input. Had Thoreau acquired the land from someone besides Emerson (or another like-minded patron), he would have had to pay the market rent. In effect, therefore, Emerson made a "gift" of the rent to Thoreau by not charging him.[9] Nevertheless, calculation of the true profitability of Thoreau's venture must account for the "opportunity cost" of the land as reflected by its market value.

Thoreau tells us that the eleven-acre parcel on which he squatted was bought for $8.08 an acre the previous year (51), making the market value of the entire parcel $88.88. However, he only cultivated two and a half acres of the parcel. Thus, the total value of the cultivated land was $20.20. This, combined with the value of the house, yields the total value of Thoreau's assets:

Value of house	$28.12½
Value of land	20.20
Total asset value	$48.32½

Taking the ratio of Thoreau's net income to the total value of his assets yields the rate of return on assets:

$$\text{Return on assets} = \frac{\$2.90\tfrac{3}{4}}{\$48.32\tfrac{1}{2}} = 6.017\%$$

As a basis for comparison, the table below shows the results of a comparable calculation for American farmers, at ten year intervals, during the twentieth century (1910-2000).[10] The returns range from a low of 2.1% in 1980 to a high of 18.1% in 1950, with an average return of 9.6%. Thus, Thoreau's return, while somewhat below the average, is quite respectable.

Return on assets (land and buildings) for American farmers, 1910-2000

1910	12.0%
1920	11.7
1930	8.9
1940	13.3
1950	18.1
1960	9.2
1970	8.1
1980	2.1
1990	7.7
2000	4.8

This comparison, however, needs to be qualified in two ways. First, as noted above, Thoreau earned a substantial portion of his income (36.3%) from working as a surveyor, carpenter, and other forms of day labor (55). If his income from farming alone were considered, he would have incurred a loss of $10.43¼ on the farm, yielding a negative return on assets of 21.6%. Clearly, inclusion of his non-farm income is crucial in reaching the conclusion that his overall experiment was profitable. But this is in keeping with American farmers who, in the twentieth century at least, had begun to earn a substantial portion of their income from non-farm sources. For example, data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that the percent of farm operator income from non-farm sources grew dramatically in the late twentieth century.[11] The primary reasons were the increased use of labor-saving technologies in farming and improved education levels of farm operators, both of which allowed (or necessitated) farmers to pursue other occupations while maintaining their farms.[12] In economic terms, this trend has proved beneficial for farm families by partially insulating them from fluctuations in farm earnings due to weather and variable agricultural prices. Thoreau was therefore ahead of his contemporaries in practicing this form of income diversification.

A second factor that needs to be considered in evaluating the profitability of Thoreau's experiment is the importance of his non-pecuniary returns. As he notes, in addition to a house and the monetary returns from selling his surplus crop, he secured "leisure and independence and health" (57). Economists count these benefits, along with profit, as an important component of the overall "utility," or level of satisfaction, that one receives from engaging in an activity or business. Consideration of these factors is especially relevant for the evaluation of family farms (or any other family business), whose owners often forego higher returns in other occupations "because of the perceived noneconomic benefits of farming as a way of life."[13]

Beyond this, Thoreau's "leisure and independence" while at Walden yielded two books, numerous lectures, and countless journal entries that have been of incalculable value to subsequent generations of scholars, students, reformers, and admirers, not to mention the profits from sales of *Walden*. In this sense, the rate of return calculated above greatly understates the true "profitability" of Thoreau's stay at Walden. All told, therefore, it is safe to conclude that his experiment was a "complete success" after all.

Notes

1. Emerson purchased the land the previous fall, possibly for the purpose of building his own secluded study. See Walter Harding, *The Days of Henry Thoreau. A Biography* (1965; rpt., New York: Dover Publications, 1982), pp. 179–180; and Bradley P. Dean, "Rediscovery at Walden: The History of Thoreau's Bean-Field," *The Concord Saunterer* N.S. 12-13 (2004-2005): 86–137.

2. Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden*, ed., Walter Harding (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1995), p. 52. All subsequent references to this edition are provided parenthetically in the text.

3. Harding, *Days*, p. 182.

4. Richardson notes that Thoreau's expenses were roughly equivalent to the salary of a day laborer for six months to a year or a year's rent at college, but he too neglected the cost of the land. Robert Richardson, *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 166–167.

5. However, any periodic expenditures on maintenance of the assets should enter the profit statement.

6. See, for example, Ronald D. Kay, William M. Edwards, and Patricia Duffy, *Farm Management*, 5th Edition (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), Chapter 6.

7. Thoreau provides the components of this cost in the chapter titled "The Bean-Field" (pp. 158–159).

8. Bradley Dean describes what happened to the house after Thoreau vacated it in September, 1847 (Dean, "Rediscovery at Walden," pp. 97–102). Although it was eventually sold to the Clark family, no sale price was given.

9. Emerson did, however, stipulate that ownership of Thoreau's house would revert to Emerson at the end of Thoreau's sojourn, and that Thoreau would clear and cultivate a portion of the land (Dean, "Rediscovery at Walden," p. 91). Economists would characterize the arrangement between Emerson and Thoreau as a joint venture to which Emerson contributed the land and Thoreau contributed the capital and labor.

10. The rates were calculated using historical data on net farm incomes and the value of land and buildings in farming. The data were obtained from George Thomas Kurian, *Datapedia of the United States* (Lanham, Md.: Bernan Press, 1994) for the years 1910-1990, and *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003) for 2000. Data were not readily available to calculate rates of return for the nineteenth century.

11. Ashok K. Mishra, et al., *Income, Wealth, and the Economic Well-Being of Farm Households* (Washington, DC: Economic Research Service/USDA, 2002), p. 16, Table 2.

12. Mishra, *Income*, p. 16.

13. Mishra, *Income*, p. 35.

Remembering Thoreau

Over the years devotees of Henry David Thoreau have remembered the Thoreau Society in major gifts or legacies. Several members of the Society's Board have made arrangements in their wills or charitable remainder trusts to make the Society a beneficiary. The Board wishes to encourage others in a position to do so to consider this way of helping the organization.

Most members will consult their own estate or legal advisors for making such arrangements. In addition, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation has agreed to facilitate arrangements or answer questions. The Foundation is at 169 Merrimack Street, Fifth Floor, Lowell MA 01852 U.S.A., tel. 1-978-970-1600. The Executive Director is David Kronberg, whose email address is dave.glcf@verizon.net. The Foundation's website is www.glcfoundation.org.

As one example, the Greater Lowell Foundation can receive, on behalf of the Thoreau Society, appreciated stock to create a trust or gift annuity that would pay beneficiaries during their lives a high rate of return—the exact amount would depend on their ages at the time of the gift, and the Thoreau Society could benefit immediately through an innovative program at the Community Foundation. In both cases there would be a substantial charitable income-tax deduction. In the charitable trust case, when the last beneficiary dies, the balance would go to the Thoreau Society.

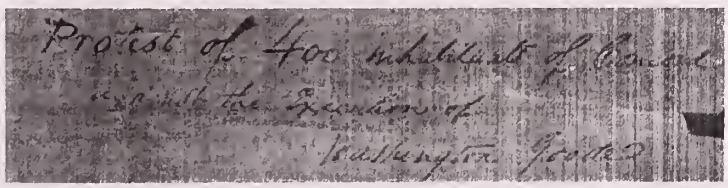
The Washington Goode Petition in the Thoreau Society Collections

Jeffrey S. Cramer

[**Editor's Note**: We reprint the following item from "The Thoreau Update," vol. 1, issue 2 (Spring 2005), an "e-newsletter from the Walden Woods Project's Thoreau Institute Library," where this item appeared under the title "Protest of 400 Inhabitants of Concord Against the Execution of Washington Goode." Background information on the Washington Goode affair and the petition appears in Walter Harding, *The Days of Henry Thoreau: A Biography* (1965; New York: Dover, 1982), p. 314; Ruth Robinson Wheeler, "Thoreau and Capital Publishment," *Concord Journal*, 26 December 1963, which was reprinted in the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 86, (Winter 1964): 1; and Barry Kritzberg, "Washington Goode, Henry David Thoreau and Capital Punishment," *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 182 (Winter 1988): 1.]

In our continuing efforts to conserve and preserve the materials held at the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, the "Protest of 400 … against the execution of Washington Goode" from the Thoreau Society Archives was recently identified as a priority piece for restoration and preservation. The "Protest of 400" is a document of vital historical interest in the history of human rights. Washington Goode was a black seaman accused of murdering another black seaman over a prostitute and sentenced to death based upon circumstantial evidence. In an effort to save Washington Goode from execution, four hundred citizens of Concord, Massachusetts—including Thoreau and Emerson—signed a petition, now known as the "Protest of 400 … against the execution of Washington Goode."

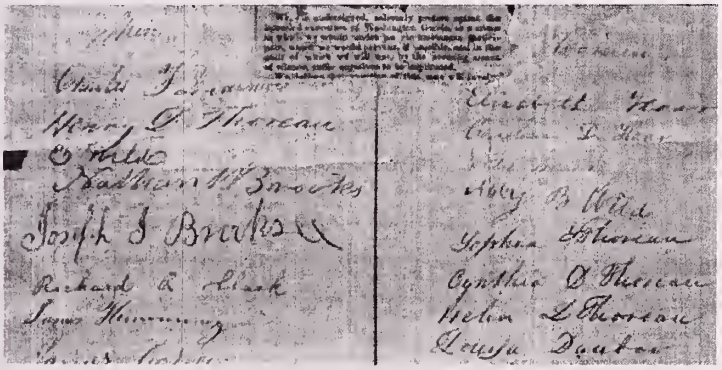
The "Protest of 400" dating from 1849 consists of eight sheets of paper pasted together at the top and bottom margins, creating a



document approximately ten inches wide and ninety inches long, with several additional pieces of paper attached to it. Each sheet overlapped the one below it. The sheets were mottled and had breaks, tears, and loss from insect damage. There were numerous tears on the edges and top, and a strip of adhesive tape on the back.

By the nature of its condition, it could no longer be used or examined without causing considerable damage to the document. For an unknown number of years this delicate document had been rolled and flattened when placed in a small cardboard box, creating creases approximately every 1.5 inches in the brittle document and an inability to lay the six-foot document out.

This document was one of 130 petitions from Massachusetts communities together containing over 24,000 signatures on behalf of Goode. Reformers such as Frederick Douglas, Wendell



Phillips, and James Freeman Clarke were all interested in Goode's fate, not only in protest of capital punishment, but because the sentencing had racist overtones. The efforts to reverse Goode's sentence were unsuccessful. Goode was hanged in Boston on 25 May 1849. Despite the failure, the document remains relevant, both because of its place in an historical context and because of the signatures it contains.

With a generous grant from The Bay Foundation, the New England Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) was commissioned to review and treat the document. The NEDCC, founded in 1973, is the largest non-profit, regional facility in the United States that specializes in the conservation of paper materials. The method of treatment performed at NEDCC was as follows:

- Surface soil and dirt was reduced using dry cleaning methods. This method prevents further damage occurring from the cleaning process.
- The adhesive tape was removed using heat and a xylene solvent.
- The document was immersed in a water/ethanol bath to further clean the paper and reduce acidity.
- Tears and breaks were mended using Japanese paper and wheat starch paste.
- The rolled document was flattened and dried between blotters under pressure.
- The document was placed in a polyester film folder welded (at the top only) to reinforce and protect against dirt and handling; then rolled and secured with a cloth tape.

Because of the sheer size of the document and its fragile condition, even after restoration, the NEDCC has recommended against placing it on display in the Library. The "Protest of 400" is now stored in our secure, climate-controlled vault where it will be made available for viewing upon request. For more information about this or other materials in the Thoreau Society Collections, please contact ... Jeff.Cramer@walden.org.

A Review of Lance Newman's *Our Common Dwelling*

Laura Dassow Walls

Lance Newman. *Our Common Dwelling: Henry Thoreau, Transcendentalism, and the Class Politics of Nature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Hardcover; ISBN: 1-4039-6779-2; 276 pp., US$65.00.

The ghost in the machine of American Romanticism is class." So writes Lance Newman in this challenging, exciting, wide-ranging, and passionate new book. Given the triumvirate of race, class, and gender, American critics have attended well to race and gender but hardly at all to class, an oversight that Newman seeks to correct. American Transcendentalism was, he argues, a direct response to class tensions in the 1830s and 40s, nowhere more so than in the one area that would seem to have been an escape from class conflict: the romanticization of nature. Ecocriticism has sidelined itself from this important line of insight by "telling an abstract tale of how humanity has lost touch with nature," whereas a historically grounded critique like Newman's reveals that "wholesale environmental destruction is not a transhistorical characteristic of human societies, but a specific feature of class societies" which capitalism has accelerated. Recovering that history for antebellum New England shows that "self-conscious, aggressive, collective struggle along class lines" was that period's "historical bedrock" and the motive force behind Transcendentalism, which turned to nature for programs and ideals that would redeem the corrupt social order.

Within this framework, it is Orestes Brownson rather than Ralph Waldo Emerson who appears central to Transcendentalism in the 1830s—Brownson, who has been "written out of the history of the period." In this view, George Ripley's Brook Farm and even Thoreau's sojourn at Walden become responses to Brownson, attempts to design peaceful alternatives to bloody class revolution. While Newman has relatively little to say about Emerson, he does include illuminating chapters on Hawthorne, Fuller, and Wordsworth. The author who is absolutely central to his vision, however, is Thoreau, who was radicalized first by Brownson and who went on to an increasingly materialist understanding of "ecosocial history." Newman shows that Thoreau's turn toward natural history was not a turn away from political reform, but towards it, for the more Thoreau

moved toward a materialistic understanding of nature, the more deeply he understood the need for material change in the social world—direct action, not just fine ideas. *Wild Fruits* becomes an extended political argument: instead of haranguing the community from outside, as in *Walden*, Thoreau takes up residence within the ecosocial community described by common objects and actions, to create a redemptive, collective aesthetic.

> I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows.
>
> **"Walking"**

Newman uses his final chapters to mount a critique of contemporary ecocriticism. For too long, he argues, ecocriticism has seen nature as the only true reality and failed to incorporate the equally important and influential reality of the social world. Yet nature and society cannot be opposed, for this alienates each from the other and paralyzes the possibility of social action. Thoreau shows how to move beyond the paralyzing "politics of nostalgia" by replanting his vision of the integration of nature and society back into the politics of radical democracy. The new challenge for ecocriticism is to reintegrate the voices protesting capitalism's destruction of the earth with those protesting its destruction of people's lives. At the core of this new project will be nature writing, for it is inherently a form of cultural debate, a critique of the "capitalist ecosocial order" that examines our material connections with nature. As Newman concludes, "If we wish to change our relationship with nature, we must change the way we work within it." To carry that revolution, ideas must, as Thoreau understood, become material forces in the world. Currently some of the keenest questions in Thoreau circles have been how to relate his natural history with his political writings. Newman integrates them seamlessly, and in so doing recasts not just Thoreau but American Romanticism, and the potential for nature writing to address the deepest challenges of our time.

Obituary: Lauriat Lane, Jr.

Brian Bartlett

Lauriat Lane, Jr., Thoreau scholar, Harvard graduate (Ph.D.), and member of the Thoreau Society for the past half century, died this past March at the age of 80 in Fredericton, Canada, where he had been Professor Emeritus at the University of New Brunswick, editor of *English Studies in Canada*, a singer in several choral groups, and a long-time supporter of human rights, civil liberties, and nature conservation. His special literary interests included Melville and MacLeish, and he co-edited the anthology *The Dickens Critics*, as well as editing *Approaches to Walden* (Wadsworth, 1961), an innovative handbook and compilation of criticism on Thoreau's classic. Lane's many journal publications on Thoreau, published in such journals as *American Transcendental Quarterly*, *The Canadian Review of American Studies*, *The Dalhousie Review*, and *Studies in Romanticism*, include "*Cape Cod*—Thoreau's Sandy Pastoral," "Thoreau's Autumnal Indian," "Mountain Gloom and Yankee Poetry: Thoreau, Emerson, Frost," "*Walden*, Paragraphs 1–3," and "*Walden*, the Second Year," one of the clearest discussions of how Thoreau fictionalized his two years at Walden Pond into one. Lane is survived by a daughter, Hannah, and a son, Lauriat, and by his wife, the poet M. Travis Lane. His ashes have been buried by his beloved retreat on a saltwater river, the Magaguadavic. In a local newspaper, his obituary ended with the last four sentences of *Walden*: "The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star."

Thoreau Society Agrees to Move Offices to Thoreau Birthplace

[**Editor's Note**: The following item has been adopted from a press release that, as we go to press, will soon be issued jointly by the Thoreau Society and the Thoreau Farm Trust, Inc.]

The Thoreau Farm Trust, Inc. and the Thoreau Society have reached an Agreement in Principle that the Thoreau Society will move its offices to Henry David Thoreau's birthplace on Virginia Road in Concord when the farmhouse is restored.

The Thoreau Farm Trust, Inc. (TFT) is a Concord-based nonprofit group seeking funds to restore the Thoreau birthplace. Its plan is to establish a small education center on the property devoted to celebrating Thoreau's life in his family and community, and honoring Concord's rich farming tradition. The house is currently owned by the Town of Concord, which purchased it, along with twenty acres of surrounding farmland, in 1997. The purchase was made with a combination of public funds and private donations. In July 2004 the Town signed a purchase-and-sale agreement with the TFT stating that the birthplace and two acres of the land would be deeded to the TFT once the group had raised the $800,000 needed to restore and rehabilitate the farmhouse. The rest of the land, which has been continuously cultivated for more than 300 years, is being farmed by Gaining Ground, a local nonprofit that grows food for the hungry. Besides renting a portion of the house to the Thoreau Society, the TFT also plans to provide a community meeting room in the house, where small meetings of local organizations could be held.

The Thoreau Society, with an international membership of over 1,600, has a mission to honor Henry David Thoreau by stimulating interest in and fostering education about his life, works, and philosophy and his place in his world and ours; encouraging research on his life and writings; acting as a repository for material relevant to Thoreau; and advocating for the

preservation of Thoreau Country. This oldest and largest organization devoted to the legacy of an American author maintains the Shop at Walden Pond and serves as the official Friends group for Walden, supporting the educational programs, visitor services, park operations and conservation efforts at Walden Pond State Reservation. In 1995 the Thoreau Society joined with the Walden Woods Project to open the Thoreau Institute, an education and research center on the hillside above Walden Pond in Lincoln. The Institute houses the collections of the Society, which are now available to the public in that repository. In 2003 the Society moved back to Concord, renting a house at historic Meriam's Corner from Minute Man National Park. Now the Thoreau Society, with its nationwide and worldwide constituency, is truly coming home—to the house where its namesake was born.

"We are delighted to announce this development," stated Thoreau Society Executive Director Jayne Gordon. "It would not be possible without the extraordinarily hard work of the Thoreau Farm Trust and the Town of Concord. We applaud their sensitivity to the historic significance of this house with its surrounding agricultural landscape, and to the importance of preserving, interpreting, and opening to the public Thoreau's first home. Our members all over the country and in so many other nations have come to recognize the importance of having our headquarters at this very special place."

Lucille Daniel Stott, President of the TFT, characterized the agreement with the Thoreau Society as "serendipity." "Just as it seems right for the Thoreau Society, it is also a perfect fit for us," said Stott. "The Society will provide a quiet but significant presence at the house while adding enormous educational value to our whole enterprise. This agreement has fueled our effort by making us even more devoted to raising the necessary funds, completing work on the house, and inviting the Society into its new home."

The terms of the agreement, ratified by the boards of both organizations, specify that the Thoreau Society will work with the TFT to provide interpretive tours and educational programs at the site. The setting amidst cultivated fields is a perfect complement to the settings of Walden, the rivers, Estabrook Woods and the center of town, which all figured so prominently in Thoreau's excursions, his journals and his published works.

An early-summer event is planned to celebrate this announcement and details will be on the websites of both the TFT (www.thoreaufarm.org) and the Thoreau Society (www.thoreausociety.org).

Notes & Queries

☞ We are grateful to the authors who contributed articles for this number of the *Bulletin*. **Laura Dassow Walls**, Professor of English and the John H. Bennett Jr. Chair of Southern Letters at the University of South Carolina, is a member of the Thoreau Society Board of Directors. **Thomas J. Miceli** is a professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. **Steven Hartman**, Associate Professor of English at Växjö University, Sweden, is the author of numerous works of short fiction, many literary translations from Swedish, and several scholarly essays focusing on Thoreau and his literary progeny. His doctoral dissertation, "Faces of Thoreau in American Literature" (SUNY Albany, 2003), examined the literary, cultural, and political legacies of Thoreau as embraced, resisted, or reconstructed in recent American literature. **Brian Bartlett** is a poet from Halifax, Nova Scotia, whose *Wanting the Day: Selected Poems* was published in Canada and England in 2003.

☞ Robert Jan "Roy" van de Hoek of Playa del Rey, California, is researching the natural history of western Massachusetts in relation to Thoreau's 1844 trip to the Berkshire Mountains, as well as any influence Thoreau may have exercised on late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century naturalists Ralph Hoffmann, who lived in Stockbridge, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, until moving to Missouri in 1909 and then to California about 1920, and Charles Wendell Townsend, who lived in eastern Massachusetts (Ipswich) and authored several books of natural history about that region. If you have information that might be useful to van de Hoek, please contact him at robertvandehoek@yahoo.com or 1-310-821-9045.

☞ Danny Goldberg's *How the Left Lost Teen Spirit* (New York: RDV Books/Akashic Books, 2005), which was first published in 2003 as *Dispatches From the Culture Wars: How the Left Lost Teen Spirit* (Miramax Books), includes a description of visiting Walden Woods with Don Henley "early in the nineties" and attending the June 1998 dedication ceremony for the Thoreau Institute, where "President and Mrs. Clinton ... were radiant in describing the importance of Thoreau's legacy." Goldberg continues, "President Clinton was at his best, joking about the irony of walking in pristine woods while being trailed by a TV camera" (p. 235).

☞ From John Nichols' foreword to David Petersen's *On the Wild Edge: In Search of a Natural Life* (Holt, 2005): "As we have listened in the past to our Thoreaus, Rachel Carsons, and Aldo Leopolds, we must listen now to the David Petersens among us." From this book's inside-front jacket: "In the past we listened to Henry David Thoreau or Aldo Leopold: today it is Petersen's turn. His observations are lyrical, scientific, and from the heart. He reinforces Thoreau's dictum: 'In wildness is the preservation of the earth [sic].' " Apparently someone did not listen closely enough in the past to his or her Thoreau!

☞ Athol, Massachusetts, librarian Corinne Smith points out that Donald Trump, in his recent book *Trump: How to Get Rich*, concludes his chapter titled "Get a Prenuptial Agreement" with the comment: "There's nothing wrong with common sense. Be like Thoreau and simplify." Uh, yeah. Later, while reading *Consciousness in Concord*, Smith came across Thoreau's journal entry for 20 August 1840, wherein he suggests that a great historian "stalking the aisles of the past" would hear and attend to "the faintest trump," even though that trump might lead him to "the neglect of many a gaudy pavilion." So the Donald admires the Henry and preaches good ol' Thoreauvian simplicity in a book about the rich getting richer, presumably in part so that they can build additional preposterously ornate high-rises in which the ridiculously wealthy can live and shop and have their being. All of which suggests that heaven is not the only thing under our feet and over our heads!

☞ The Donald is our shepherd; we shall want forever. He maketh us to lie down in delicious dens of iniquity; he leadeth us beside gaily gurgling gutters. He pricketh our appetites; he taketh us down paths of boundless desires, for his name's sake. Yea, though we walk through concrete valleys in the shadow of Trump Towers, we shall feel no hypocrisy, no, not very keenly, for the

Donald, he hath preceded us; his buildings and his self-help books, they comfort and encourage us. He hath builded up "many a gaudy pavilion" before us, yea, and in the presence of the homeless and the poor, all of whose minds he hath anointed with dreams of cups running over in the form of monstrous-huge bank accounts. Surely greed and wanting more and more and still more shall follow us all the days of our life, and we shall aspire to dwell in the Donald's buildings forever—or at least until we are compelled to take up permanent residence in a locale rumored to be very considerably warmer than New York City and Chicago. Oh, and, yeah, we almost forgot—Amen.

☞ The 6 May "alternative saint" pictured in the "Calendar of Jubilee Saints 2005" (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia): Thoreau, "Celebrant of uncomplicated natural life, the future primitive" and "back-to-the-land advocate" (with a note that he died on 6 May in 1862). The 5 May "saint" is Marx, born that date in 1818.

☞ After a friend told the indefatigable Chris Dodge about her recent interview on the Bookslut web site (www.bookslut.com), he searched the site for mentions of Thoreau and came up with four that struck us as interesting. **First**, from a review (apparently by Tim Kindseth) of *The List: The Uses and Pleasures of Cataloguing* by Robert E. Belknap: "Recognizing that the list of literary listers could go on and on, Belknap narrows his focus to examples from Emerson, Whitman, Melville, and Thoreau.... Thoreau ... was possessed by a near fanatical devotion to knowledge of the flora and fauna around him in Massachusetts. His meticulous journals fill fourteen volumes, and while there weren't any whales in Walden Pond, Thoreau found plenty of other fish and motley creatures to observe and comment upon near his spartan cabin in the woods. In a marvelous journal entry from February 16, 1855, Thoreau fastidiously lists the measurements of a dead mouse, noting at the end, 'longest mustachios 1 3/8 inches.' " **Second**, when asked in an interview when she first discovered Thoreau, author Jane Brox replied, "You read Thoreau a little bit all of your life, but I never really delved into him since college. Then when I was writing *Five Thousand Days Like This One*, I thought the book I have to read is *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. I was just floored by it. I had never read it before, and I was just taken. He seemed like my nineteenth century counterpart. I just kept going with him, I guess. It really surprised me." **Third**, from a review by Sarah Statz of Robert Sullivan's *Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants*: "When he wanted to commune with nature, Henry David Thoreau journeyed alone to Walden Pond, took an axe with which to build his own dwelling, and lived there for two years. Robert Sullivan, acting on the same desire, went and stood in a city alley." And, **finally**, from a review by Dale Smith of Joan Kyger's *As Ever*: "While there are also some 19th-century antecedents for notebook writing (there's Thoreau, of course, and Whitman's *Specimen Days*), the New American generation of the '50s and '60s developed new narrative techniques based on chance accumulations, thoughts, and captured experiences taken down casually in notebooks."

2005 Annual Gathering

Thoreau: Nature, Science, and Higher Laws
7–10 July 2005
Concord, Massachusetts

The Annual Gathering Committee needs volunteers to assist with registration, setting up meeting rooms, hospitality, and a variety of other tasks associated with the Annual Gathering. To volunteer, please contact Jayne Gordon:

55 Old Bedford Road, Concord, MA 01742 U.S.A.
(978) 369-5319
jayne.gordon@thoreausociety.org

☞ Sadly, we think, Charles, Prince of Wales, is related to Thoreau through his recent marriage with Camilla Parker Bowles. Thoreau's maternal grandmother was Mary Jones (1748-1830), whose brother Ephraim Jr. (1750-1812) married Charlotte Coursolles (1756-1803). Their great-granddaughter Sophia Mary MacNab (1832-1917) was Camilla's great-great-grandmother.

☞ From Julie Herrada's "Letters to the Unabomber: A Case Study and Some Reflections," published in *Archival Issues*, the journal of the Midwest Archives Conference (Vol. 28, No. 1, cover date 2003-2004, but published January 2005): "[Theodore] Kaczynski is in the tradition of those Americans who have been outspoken in their rejection of technology and modernity in their lives, from Thoreau to Scott Nearing."

☞ On a recent television game show, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, the contestants were quizzed, "Published in 1999, the book *Wild Fruits* is a compilation of previously lost writings by what author?" The possible answers were Collette, Oscar Wilde, Charles Darwin, or Henry David Thoreau.

☞ Bob Dylan's much-lauded autobiographical work, *Chronicles, Volume One* (Simon and Schuster, 2004), speaks of fellow musician Ricky Nelson "being brought up out West on a family TV show. It was like he'd been born and raised on Walden Pond where everything was hunky-dory, and I'd come out of the dark demonic woods." While Dylan's image of Walden seems oddly domestic and orthodox, he later writes in a more Thoreauvian vein when he says of Al Capone: "He's not interesting or heroic.... He's frigid. A sucker fish, seems like a man who never got out alone in nature for a minute in his life." The importance Dylan places on being "alone in nature" comes up later in the book when he writes, "In nature there's a remedy for everything and that's where I usually go hunting for it. I'd find myself on a houseboat, a floating mobile home, hoping to hear a voice—crawling at slow speed—nosed up on a protective beach at night in the wilderness—moose, bear, deer around...." At one point Dylan obviously echoes Thoreau, whether he was conscious of doing so or not: "Things grow at night. My imagination is available to me at night. All my preoccupations of things go away. Sometimes you could be looking for heaven in the wrong places. Sometimes it could be under your feet. Or in your bed."

☞ Dan Neil wrote the following in a review of a new Subaru wagon, the review appearing in the 13 April 2005 *Los Angeles Times* "Classified" section: "Subaru is the Unitarian Church of automotive brands: ecumenical, accepting, self-sufficient, observant of the natural world and reverent before it. Thoreau would have driven a Subaru, if you could have gotten him to stop playing with the windshield wipers." We confess to not having a

clue about why Thoreau would be playing with a Subaru's wipers!

☞ "The Poet's Practice," an article by Chris Welch on the front page of the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*'s "Variety" section, Sunday, 3 April 2005, p. E1, features a top-of-the-fold, nearly full-page photo of Gary Snyder, subject of the article, topped by a quotation from Snyder: "Wilderness is not, as Thoreau said, 'the preservation of the World.' It Is the World." Did the Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet really misquote "Walking" by using *Wilderness* instead of *Wildness* (a far-too-common misquotation, this)? Incidentally, in the "Walking" manuscript at the Concord Free Public Library, "World" is not capitalized, although the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, where the essay first appeared, did emend the manuscript by capitalizing the word, which is unfortunate because the emendation slightly diminishes the impact of Thoreau's capitalization of "Wildness."

☞ Robert Sullivan, in *Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants* (Bloomsbury, 2004), bills himself as a latter-day Thoreau, investigating life in the alleys of Lower Manhattan in a fashion somewhat analogous to Thoreau's investigation of life at Walden Pond. In an recent interview with Dave Welch of Powells.com, Sullivan says, in explaining how he came to write his book: "I was reading a lot of the transcendentalists, a lot of Emerson and Thoreau, and I thought of *Walden* as the archetypal nature book. In a way, it's America's nature book—people look to it as a way to experience nature in the quotes-in-your-daybook way—but in fact if you read it, you see that it's really about living in society. Thoreau was kind of freaked out by living in nature, frankly. He went to the pond to think about how we live in society. So now I think: I'm going to go and do a bad Thoreau imitation, but instead of going out to the so-called wilderness, I'm going to go into the city, which is in its own way just as wild as anything, and I'm going to look at the rat, this most reviled creature, this example of what simply can't be natural. I'm going to try to show not just that it's natural but that we live right next to it and we're part of why we don't like it...."

☞ "From Henry David Thoreau to John Muir to Edward Abbey, the most vigorous, memorable, persuasive, and quotable advocates of outdoor experience have been very independent fellows, if also wonderful writers." So claims Patricia Nelson in her book *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (W. W. Norton, 2000).

☞ Thomas Rain Crowe's *Zoro's Field: My Life in the Appalachian Woods* (University of Georgia Press, 2005) is billed as "a *Walden* for today." In the book's foreword, Christopher Camuto writes, "References to Thoreau are almost always trite, but Henry would dig this humble, honest book...."

☞ As we go to press (15 April) two "pristine" 3½ x 5-inch beige invitation-tickets are being auctioned on e-Bay. The items are headed "APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB / THURSDAY, MAY 24, 1917, AT 8:00 P.M. / Huntington Hall, Mass. Institute of Technology, 491 Boylston St., Boston / HENRY DAVID THOREAU / 1817–1917" and read thus: "A meeting in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's birth. DR. EDWARD WALDO EMERSON of Concord, who was a boyhood friend of Thoreau's, will give some personal recollections of Thoreau, after which MR. HERBERT W. GLEASON, a Club member, will throw on the screen a series of colored views, taken in Concord, illustrating many of Thoreau's nature-descriptions. This is a card of invitation[.] No ticket is necessary for admission[.]"

Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

Robert N. Hudspeth

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Please submit items for the Summer Bulletin to your editor before

15 July 2005

We are indebted to the following individuals for information used in this Bulletin: Brian Bartlett, Dave Bonney, Clarence Burley, Antonio Casado da Rocha, Jim Dawson, Chris Dodge, Bob Flagg, Victor Carl Friesen, Mel Hopper, Shoko Itoh, Mike Keating, Antonio Lastra, W. Barksdale Maynard, Edmund A. Schofield, Dale Schwie, Corinne Smith, the Thoreau Society of Japan, Laura Dassow Walls, John A. Wickham, and Richard Winslow III. Please keep your editor informed of items not yet added and new items as they appear.

Announcements

THOREAU SOCIETY'S *LIFE WITH PRINCIPLE* DVD

As we go to press, the Society's DVD is being edited in preparation for the inaugural DVD workshop, which will take place in Worcester, Massachusetts, on 11 June (see listing below). A second DVD workshop will take place in Santa Rosa, California, on 25 June (again, see below), and we anticipate that several other workshops will be scheduled throughout the summer, throughout the remainder of the year, and beyond. We'll report more on this exciting project in the next Bulletin.

More detailed, comprehensive, and timely descriptions of announcements and events are available at
www.thoreausociety.org

Calendar of Events

3–5 JUNE 2005

SEMINAR: THOREAU AND EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN MIND

Connie Baxter Marlow will lead a seminar at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies in **Aspen, Colorado**. For more information contact Marlow at FlywEagles@aol.com.

11 JUNE 2005 **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

"LIFE WITH PRINCIPLE" DVD WORKSHOP

Edmund A. Schofield and Mike Keating will lead a workshop based on the recently developed Thoreau Society DVD at Hogan Center in the Student Union Building at the College of the Holy Cross in **Worcester, Massachusetts**. For more information contact the Thoreau Society at dvd@thoreausociety.org.

21–25 JUNE 2005

ASLE CONFERENCE

The sixth bienniel international conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) will be held at the University of Oregon, **Eugene, Oregon**. Information on speakers, sessions, and field trips, as well as a form for registering, is available at www.asle.umn.edu.

22 JUNE 2005 **7–9 p.m.**

THOREAU SOCIETY PRESENTS ... DANIEL ELLSBERG

Ellsberg will speak in Sophia Hall at the Summerfield Waldorf School in **Santa Rosa, California**, on the role Thoreau played in his (Ellsberg's) historic decision to publish the Pentagon Papers and on Thoreau's continuing relevance. For more information contact Thoreau Society at dvd@thoreausociety.org.

25 JUNE 2005 **9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

"LIFE WITH PRINCIPLE" DVD WORKSHOP

Bob Flagg will lead a workshop based on the recently developed Thoreau Society DVD in Sophia Hall at the Summerfield Waldorf School, **Santa Rosa, California**. For more information contact Thoreau Society at dvd@thoreausociety.org.

7–10 JULY 2005

THOREAU SOCIETY ANNUAL GATHERING

Held in **Concord, Massachusetts**; this year's theme will be "Thoreau: Nature, Science, and Higher Laws."

10–15 JULY 2005

FIVE-DAY WORKSHOP

Thoreau Society Board member Jennie Walker Wollenweber will teach "Law of Conscience: Thoreau and (Nonviolent) Protest," a five-day workshop, 10–15 July 2005, at Common Ground on the Hill, on the campus of McDaniel College in **Westminster, Maryland**. For more information, email cground@qis.net, visit www.commongroundonthehill.org, or call (410) 857-2771.

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